United Nations A/C.3/57/SR.46

General Assembly
Fifty-seventh session

Official Records

Distr.: General
4 December 2002

Original: English

Third Committee

Summary record of the 46th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 12 November 2002, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Wenaweser ..... (Liechtenstein)
later: Mr. Morikawa (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Japan)

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02-68926 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 102: Advancement of women (*continued*) (A/C.3/57/L.17)

Draft resolution A/C.3/57/L.17: Trafficking in women and girls

1. **The Chairman** invited the Committee to take action on the draft resolution, which contained no programme budget implications.

2. **Ms. Garcia** (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the sponsors, said that Armenia, Costa Rica, Djibouti, Haiti, Jamaica, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liberia and Nigeria had joined the sponsors and that Argentina had withdrawn. The draft resolution had been revised in three places: in the seventh preambular paragraph, the first word "welcoming" had been replaced by "acknowledging"; in the eighth preambular paragraph, the word "also" had been deleted from the first line; and paragraph 8 had been reworded to read: "*Calls upon* all Governments to criminalize trafficking in women and children, in particular girls, in all its forms, to condemn and penalize those offenders involved, including intermediaries, whether local or foreign, by the competent national authorities, either in the country of origin of the offender or in the country in which the abuse takes place, in accordance with due process of law, while ensuring that the victims of those practices are not penalized for being trafficked, and to penalize persons in authority found guilty of sexually assaulting victims of trafficking in their custody."

3. Her delegation appreciated the sponsors' support and patience and the flexibility displayed by the partners. Since both groups had worked hard to ensure that the language matched that of previous years, she trusted that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

4. **The Chairman** said that Belarus, El Salvador, Japan, Malaysia and Mozambique had joined the sponsors.

5. *Draft resolution A/C.3/57/L.17, as orally revised, was adopted.*

Agenda item 109: Human rights questions (*continued*)

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms (*continued*) (A/57/134, A/57/138, A/57/140, A/57/182, A/57/205, A/57/205/Add.1, A/57/274, A/57/275, A/57/277, A/57/283, A/57/311, A/57/311/Add.1, A/57/323, A/57/356, A/57/357, A/57/369, A/57/371, A/57/384, A/57/385, A/57/394, A/57/446, A/57/484; A/C.3/57/7 and A/C.3/57/L.17)

(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives (*continued*) (A/57/230, A/57/284, A/57/290 and A/57/290/Corr.1, A/57/292, A/57/309, A/57/325, A/57/326, A/57/345, A/57/349, A/57/366 and A/57/366/Add.1, A/57/433, A/57/437 and A/C.3/57/5)

(e) Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (*continued*) (A/57/36 and A/57/446)

Draft resolution A/C.3/57/L.40: Strengthening United Nations action in the field of human rights through the promotion of international cooperation and the importance of non-selectivity, impartiality and objectivity

6. **Ms. González** (Cuba) introduced the draft resolution and said that Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ghana and Pakistan had joined the sponsors and that Senegal had withdrawn.

7. **The Chairman** said that the Committee would resume its general discussion of the agenda sub-items under consideration.

8. **Mr. Mejdoub** (Tunisia) expressed his conviction that, under the leadership of the new High Commissioner, Mr. Sergio de Melo, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights would continue the leading role it had played in the defence of human rights under Ms. Mary Robinson. The international community must redouble its efforts to defeat terrorism, which had had dire consequences for human rights. Tunisia, which had long warned of its perils and had striven to endow international relations with solidarity in order to eradicate economic and

social imbalances — the wellspring of terrorism — now called for a world conference to elaborate an international code of conduct binding on all States, which would facilitate responsible dialogue that avoided double standards and outlined common denominators against terrorism. His country was particularly committed to the implementation of the Durban Programme of Action.

9. Given the international community's concern at the frequency and intensity of human rights violations, which most affected the vulnerable strata of society, he exhorted belligerents to respect human rights and settle their differences peaceably in accordance with the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations and the principles of international law. Tunisia felt strongly about human rights violations in occupied countries, especially the untenable social, economic and humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, which defied all laws and compelled the conscience of the world to denounce Israel's abuses.

10. Effective follow-up to conventions and recommendations of international conferences was essential and required the international community to strengthen its commitment to provide the resources needed for national, regional and international human rights institutions, shared action being the best manifestation of the universality, interdependence and indivisibility of human rights in the broadest sense of the term. Those rights were global; political, civil, social, cultural rights were equally important, and to prioritize them would reverse their effects. The right to development was at the heart of Tunisia's concern for the effective exercise of human rights. Consideration of those rights afforded an opportunity to reconcile differing views through an open, constructive exchange, with respect for the principles of the Charter and for international standards, in an atmosphere of mutual respect. All societies could learn from one another.

11. For 15 years, Tunisia had been endeavouring to strengthen the promotion of human rights and ease the democratic process. Six months previously, Tunisians had voted in favour of a historic referendum on a wide-ranging constitutional reform project to establish the republic of tomorrow by enshrining certain freedoms in the constitution, integrating into the political system such features as votes of no-confidence and written and oral questions, giving the legislature more monitoring power over the Government and promoting parliamentary dialogue.

12. A new second chamber afforded wider representation of the various regions and sectors of society. The powers of the Constitutional Council had been strengthened and expanded, making it the arbiter at all stages of parliamentary and legislative elections. To that end, neutrality and independence had been strengthened. The reform fostered republican principles by promoting the diversity of presidential candidates, while ensuring the irreversible abolition of the presidency for life. The Electoral Code had been amended to ensure transparency at all phases of the electoral process. The constitutional reform was part of the effort to modernize political life and build a legally constituted State that would lead Tunisia into a new era of freedoms and republican democracy.

13. **Mr. Tekin** (Turkey) said that the past year had posed new challenges for human rights. In addition to the after-effects of 11 September 2001, the attacks in Bali and the hostage-taking crisis in Moscow had highlighted terrorism's threat to human rights. However, such events should not serve as a pretext for restricting fundamental rights and freedoms. Human rights violations bred hatred, resentment and, ultimately, violence. He deplored the growing prejudices based on religion, ethnicity, nationality and race observed in the wake of 11 September. The security and stability of the world was now more dependent than ever on working towards worldwide equality, understanding, tolerance, respect for human dignity and the rule of law in order to break the vicious circle.

14. While States were primarily responsible for the exercise of human rights, in today's world such rights assumed international dimensions. His country had launched a comprehensive reform process for the promotion and protection of human rights, a process that had gathered new momentum during the previous year. A comprehensive package of constitutional amendments, adopted in October 2001, had introduced new provisions to strengthen existing safeguards in a variety of areas. The new Civil Code reflected improvements in gender equality, protection of children's rights, and freedom of association and peaceful assembly. That had been followed in 2002 by the enactment of three legislative harmonization packages that brought several laws into line with the constitutional amendments. The fundamental

achievements of the latest package included the abolition of the death penalty, on which there had been a de facto moratorium since 1984. Also, legal restrictions on the learning of various languages had been lifted, and an amendment to the Penal Code had broadened freedom of expression, in line with the European Convention on Human Rights.

15. The National Committee for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education had been instrumental in raising awareness of human rights through education. Compulsory human rights courses were offered in primary schools, police academies and civil service training programmes, and optional courses in secondary schools, and additional human rights centres had been established in universities. Moreover, recent legal amendments had been incorporated into law enforcement and judiciary training institutions. The country also conducted joint projects with the Council of Europe and the European Union on human rights education for security forces, judges, lawyers and human rights trainers.

16. Turkey, a party to most of the international human rights conventions, was in the process of acceding to the remainder. It had recently ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the ratification process for the two International Covenants was well under way. Turkey was one of 39 countries that had issued a standing invitation to the Commission on Human Rights regarding special procedures and mechanisms and had been visited by the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions, the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, and the Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons. The Special Rapporteur on violence against women was expected to visit shortly. The country was also open to the more intrusive regional human rights instruments.

17. The independent judiciary, vibrant free media, and non-governmental organizations, increasing public awareness, and national observance of international human rights standards were instrumental in safeguarding and promoting human rights. Turkey would redouble its efforts to make further strides and urged its critics to recognize its remarkable progress. No country had a perfect human rights record, but it was the duty of the entire international community to uphold the highest possible human rights standards.

18. **Mr. Kadiri** (Morocco) said that the United Nations, through its summits, major conferences and special sessions, and the human rights instruments adopted under its aegis, had inspired respect for the human person and aided the struggle against any attack on human dignity and the right to a decent life. Although progress in that field had had an enormous impact on national and international plans, manifestations of racism and related ills persisted, in violation of the most fundamental political and socio-economic rights. All rights were equal and indivisible and must be protected by one and all in pursuit of the objectives outlined by the United Nations, especially the Millennium Declaration goals. Since the development of civil and political rights depended on the simultaneous development of economic, social and cultural rights, the international community must assign priority to the right to development in order to bridge the widening gap between nations, attenuate the adverse effects of globalization and multiply the developing countries' opportunities in world markets so that they could improve their standard of living.

19. Morocco had made human rights and the promotion of democracy and good governance the keystone of its national policy, in the conviction that there could be no economic and social development without its citizens' full enjoyment of civil and political rights that enabled them to participate enthusiastically in public life. Enshrined in the preamble to the Moroccan Constitution, that commitment had resulted in the country's accession to the various international human rights instruments and was reflected in its efforts to harmonize its body of laws with those instruments. Implementation and monitoring bodies had been established, including the recently overhauled Human Rights Advisory Board, the Committee on Compensation for Victims of Forced Disappearance and Arbitrary Arrest and an office of the ombudsman. There were now 35 Moroccan women in Parliament, three of whom held government office, and reforms had been undertaken in all fields of public life.

20. The authorities had done their utmost to implement the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, and a national human rights programme, initiated in 1994 and stipulating the inclusion of human rights education in the school curriculum, had been implemented countrywide since the 2002 academic year. A human rights training and information centre had been created, in partnership

with the Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights and United Nations Development Programme. Morocco called on the international community to do everything to ensure the unrestricted enjoyment of rights by immigrants, who, despite the world's growing interdependence, were still the target of racism and xenophobia. Morocco, one of the first countries to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, appealed to others to do likewise, since only one more ratification was needed for its entry into force.

21. His delegation also entirely supported the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and appealed for their full implementation. His country had signed an agreement with the World Migration Organization to create a human rights centre to strengthen respect for the human rights of migrants, provide them with legal aid should their rights be violated, and train migrants' human rights experts and Moroccan officials working in that field. In conclusion, he appealed to the international community to persuade Israel to end its occupation of Palestinian territory, which had given rise to a new and unprecedented wave of human rights violations, and to abide by the provisions of international humanitarian law and United Nations decisions.

22. **Mr. Zackheos** (Cyprus) said that international judicial and other bodies had repeatedly stressed Turkey's sole responsibility for the violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Cyprus. Turkey had not yet implemented the 2001 decision of the European Court of Human Rights, which had found it guilty of 14 violations of the European Convention on Human Rights. Regarding missing persons, the charge had been failure to conduct an effective, credible inquiry, including exhumation and DNA testing of the remains of missing persons who had disappeared in suspicious circumstances, and to inform relatives of the results. His Government also urged the Turkish-Cypriot authorities not to ban relatives of Turkish-Cypriot missing persons from giving blood samples for such tests.

23. With regard to the property of displaced persons, Turkish official policy denying them the right to return to their homes had been reinforced by the stringent restrictions on visits to the north by Greek Cypriots living in the south, and the rights of persons with property — owned or inherited — in the north were violated, without compensation. A 1996 landmark decision of the European Court, under article 25 of the European Convention, had still not been implemented, even after three interim resolutions of the Council of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The right to privacy of Greek Cypriots in northern Cyprus was systematically denied. The Karpas Greek-Cypriot community lived in debased conditions and their freedom of movement was restricted. Their primary-school books were heavily censored and no appropriate secondary-school facilities were provided for them.

24. Turkish-Cypriot civilians had been tried by military courts, and press freedom had been severely curtailed under a regime largely dominated by the Turkish military. A Turkish-Cypriot teacher had been dismissed for criticizing the regime, and Turkish journalists and trade-unionists demonstrating against her dismissal had been harassed. Turkish Cypriots were often prohibited from participating in bi-communal events, and some had even been sentenced. Two successive Rapporteurs of the Council of Europe had reported attempts to alter the occupied area's demographic and cultural heritage by the presence of the Turkish army and the influx of settlers, whose naturalization raised a further barrier to a peaceful negotiated solution to the Cypriot conflict. Such a policy, reiterated as a crime under international law in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, could not be condoned nor could its effects be legalized ex post facto. A solution to the Cyprus problem must be based on Security Council resolutions and restore the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Cypriots in a reunified, unoccupied federal Cyprus, member of the European Union.

25. **Ms. Davtyan** (Armenia) said that human rights, democracy and the rule of law were increasingly important prerequisites for peace and security in the face of the new challenges in the modern globalized world. One such challenge was the despicable scourge of terrorism, which must be universally condemned. The response to terrorism, however, should not be so extreme as to perpetuate hatred and violence and should not be used to subdue legitimate dissent, suppress fundamental freedoms or backtrack from the considerable progress made. She agreed with the High Commissioner for Human Rights that global security must be grounded in human rights, the rule of law, social justice and enhancing democracy.

26. Protection of economic, social and cultural rights was essential to meet the challenges of globalization and ensure that all shared its benefits. The right to development was therefore of crucial importance, and she particularly valued the Millennium development goals as a means to implement that right and welcomed the High Commissioner's commitment to those issues. Respect for human rights implied tolerance, understanding and open-mindedness, and no effort must be spared to ensure that diversity was a source of strength and inspiration rather than of fear and mistrust. Armenia was a crossroad of civilizations, and she therefore welcomed dialogue among civilizations and noted that a conference on that topic would be organized jointly by her Government and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in March 2003.

27. Human rights guarantees promoted stability and security by decreasing the likelihood of violent social and political conflicts. The ethnic patchwork and history of conflict in a region like the southern Caucasus highlighted the need for the rule of law and respect for human and minority rights. She hoped that that view was shared by Armenia's neighbours because a society or Government which mistreated its own people could not be a reliable partner for others. Since independence, Armenia had committed itself to democracy, human rights and the rule of law and had undertaken significant reforms, which had been rewarded by membership in the Council of Europe in 2001. Further legislative and judicial reforms were under way aimed at bringing national institutions into line with international norms. Her Government would continue its efforts to live up to its commitments and ensure effective enjoyment of human rights.

28. *Mr. Morikawa, Vice-Chairman (Japan) took the Chair.*

29. **Mr. Kerim** (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said 2002 had been a challenging year for human rights, with both positive developments and worrisome trends. The tragic events of 11 September had brought terrorism to the forefront of the international agenda. While it was important to vigorously combat terrorism, the introduction by some States of policies which could lead to the suppression of fundamental rights and freedoms was an extremely dangerous approach. The principles of proportionality and necessity must be respected and there must be no double standard when dealing with political extremism and terrorism. Citing his own country's experience, he stressed that a political solution was always possible to any problem.

30. While universal ratification of the six core human rights treaties was important, it was even more important to ensure full and effective implementation of their provisions. Priority should be placed on creating and strengthening mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of accepted obligations, while future human rights instruments should stress transparency and cooperation, rather than declarations and commitments. The adoption of an Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, for example, would be a significant step forward. Establishment of a monitoring mechanism to ensure regular visits to places of detention would make an essential contribution to the prevention of torture and his delegation would vote to adopt the Optional Protocol at the General Assembly and urged other States to do likewise.

31. His delegation fully supported efforts to strengthen the Organization's human rights activities and looked forward with interest to the forthcoming reports of the High Commissioner on Human Rights on the new streamlined reporting procedure and on the effectiveness and improvement of the special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights. It also supported the High Commissioner's request for a 1.54 per cent increase in regular budget resources for his Office. The principle of the rule of law was essential to human rights and nothing threatened the rule of law more than impunity. The establishment of the International Criminal Court was therefore a real victory against impunity and a departure from a narrow view of State sovereignty in the face of radical violations of human rights. His Government would seek to prevent crimes under the Court's jurisdiction and help put an end to impunity for the perpetrators of such crimes. The necessary domestic procedures for implementing the obligations arising out of the Rome Statute were under way.

32. The primary responsibility for the effective implementation of human rights lay with States, and securing the rule of law required a full commitment at the national level. A strong national human rights policy and strong human rights institutions were essential. Guided by those principles, his Government had succeeded in resolving the armed conflict of a year before, which had threatened democracy and inter-

ethnic coexistence. Recent parliamentary elections had been organized and conducted in accordance with international standards and democratic values, proving the nation's commitment to democracy and the rule of law, reaffirming the maturity of Macedonian society and establishing its position as an equal and respected member of the European family. In that context, he welcomed progress in ratification of the Stabilization and Association Agreement between his Government and the European Union.

33. Gender issues were a priority and he welcomed the increase in the proportion of women members of Parliament from 7.5 to 17.5 per cent. In the context of the regional projects of the Council of Europe, his Government would host the European Ministerial Conference on Equality between Women and Men in 2003. Macedonian society also valued multiculturalism, and the Government was committed to protecting the common heritage and shared values of the various cultures in its diverse society. Bearing in mind the importance of dialogue and mutual understanding, in 2003, in the context of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, his country, in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, would host a regional forum on dialogue among civilizations.

34. **Ms. Astanah Banu** (Malaysia) expressed concern that human rights had been the first casualty of tough new measures to tackle terrorism. Racism in the West had received new currency as witnessed by the growth of political parties with anti-immigration platforms. Using the fight against terrorism as a pretext, many developed countries had instituted restrictive immigration policies and draconian measures against refugees and asylum-seekers. States which had painted themselves as champions of freedom and democracy had been the first to compromise those principles. She recalled in that regard that the Secretary-General had said that security must not be bought at the expense of human rights. During difficult times, special attention must be paid to respect international norms and standards. Democracies should not curtail freedom in order to defend it. All States should re-examine their policies and legal provisions to ensure that their actions at home matched their statements in international forums.

35. Her delegation shared the High Commissioner's concern with poverty in the world and in that context she recalled that the Food and Agriculture Organization had warned that hunger and malnutrition were on the rise among Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, leading to an increase in the incidence of low birth weights and a staggering increase in the rate of stillbirths. As a result of the Israeli blockade, millions of people were severely impoverished and threatened with food insecurity and catastrophe. Anywhere else in the world, the United Nations would have intervened, and she wondered when the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights would step in to protect the most basic rights of a people who had languished for so long under such severe conditions.

36. Turning to the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Human Rights, she pointed out that, in the reports presented to the Committee, there had been at least four references to bloc voting, but no attempt had been made to explain why more than half the membership of the Commission had felt it necessary to oppose certain resolutions. Although Member States had long stressed the importance of constructive dialogue and cooperation rather than confrontation in the area of human rights, some States continued to table resolutions targeting specific countries. The increase in bloc voting indicated a rejection by States not of the universality of human rights but of the validity of country-specific resolutions and the practice of naming and shaming. She hoped future sessions of the Commission would be more constructive and less politicized.

37. **Ms. Loemban Tobing-Klein** (Suriname) stressed the importance of human rights education as a powerful tool to address inequalities, injustices and abuses. Her delegation had tabled a draft resolution on human rights education (A/C.3/57/L.45) and she called on delegations to support that document, which stressed the importance of human rights education as a key to development. Member States should also continue to promote the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004). In that regard, she noted her delegation's good working relationship with the People's Movement for Human Rights Education (PMHRE), whose Human Rights Cities programme was aimed at promoting all human rights in order to improve the well-being of the peoples of the world.

38. Consideration of human rights agenda items, including resolutions on the situation of human rights in certain countries, should bear in mind the indivisibility and interdependence of economic, social,

cultural, civil and political rights. Special attention should be devoted to the human-rights-based approach to poverty reduction in the poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) aimed at empowering the poor, and she called on the Bretton Woods institutions to devote increased attention to the relationship between poverty and human rights. The commitments undertaken at major conferences and the Millennium development goals must also be implemented. New resources would however be necessary, and the developed world should meet the goal of allocating 0.7 per cent of GDP to official development assistance. She also expected the newly established Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States to play an important role in development efforts.

39. Finally, she drew the attention of the Committee to an important human rights instrument for the Americas, the Inter-American Democratic Charter, adopted in Lima by the Organization of American States on 11 September 2001, the very day whose tragic events had highlighted the interdependency between security, the root causes of conflicts and human rights.

40. **Mr. Tsamoulis** (Greece) expressed concern at the persistent violations of human rights in Cyprus, despite numerous resolutions of the Security Council and the Commission on Human Rights, which Turkey, occupying 37 per cent of the island, had ignored. The European Court of Human Rights had found Turkey guilty of violations of the European Convention on Human Rights, and the Turkish local administration had imposed a series of restrictions on the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) which seriously affected its capacity to pursue its mandate. The island's cultural heritage had been systematically and deliberately violated, including the destruction of over 500 Greek Orthodox churches and the theft of priceless works of art. In an effort to alter the demographic balance, 110,000 settlers from mainland Turkey had been transplanted illegally since 1974 and given properties usurped from expelled Greek Cypriots.

41. Despite all the setbacks, the resumption of talks in January had created a new opportunity for reaching a settlement of the problem of Cyprus. Unfortunately, the outlook after eight months of direct talks was not optimistic. His Government believed that a settlement should be based on the Security Council resolutions providing for a single State with sole sovereignty and international personality, comprised of two politically equal communities in federation. Since the accession of Cyprus to the European Union was imminent, the settlement should also be in conformity with the principles and values of the European Union. His delegation supported any effort by the Secretary-General to use his good offices, in a spirit of compromise, to bridge the gaps between the parties. The opportunity to achieve a settlement must be seized.

42. **Mr. Amorós Núñez** (Cuba), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation had hoped that the debate in the Committee would be based on the principles of solidarity, cooperation and mutual respect, but regrettably some delegations, including Canada and Norway, had made statements that were confrontational and negative. Their attempts to impose a single model for the observance of human rights indicated that those delegations failed to recognize the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity.

43. A double standard was applied by some delegations when it came to discussion of their own human rights violations. In Canada, for instance, there were serious concerns about discrimination against indigenous people and immigrants. The Inuit and other native groups of Canada were faced with either assimilation or poverty. Claims by indigenous groups to their traditional lands had been met with police repression and the forced displacement of populations. Basic rights were being restricted on the pretext of the fight against terrorism. Discrimination against women, disabled people and indigenous groups had also been reported in Norway. Non-citizens faced discrimination in access to employment, housing, education and health services. There was also concern over an upsurge in anti-Muslim feeling which had contributed to the murders of some immigrants and was being expressed in racist election campaign slogans. Cuba would never accept any attempt to turn the international dialogue on human rights into an instrument of domination.

44. **Mr. Redai** (Ethiopia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his country was open to criticism and was always ready to learn from developed democracies. Like other democracies, his country faced challenges in implementation, and therefore had requested assistance with capacity-building. A clash between a politically-motivated armed mob and the police had been mentioned. In that case, the police had

taken the necessary measures to control the situation. However, it was true that Ethiopia had no trained riot police and would appreciate assistance in providing such training. The allegations of human rights violations committed by the army in the south were fabrications by the Human Rights Council, which served as the voice of opposition groups and was clearly biased. He assured the delegation of Canada that the Government hoped that such events would not be repeated and that the perpetrators would be prosecuted.

45. **Ms. Pham Thi Kim Anh** (Viet Nam), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said, in response to the statement of Canada, that many Montagnard people had left for Cambodia because of poor living conditions. The Government was doing its utmost with its limited resources, but at least 1,000 villages were affected by extreme poverty, and the world community had not provided resources for poverty eradication. Outside factors had also influenced the decision of Montagnards to leave the country. The Governments of Viet Nam and Cambodia were cooperating to ensure voluntary repatriation with respect for the dignity of those individuals.

46. **Mr. Kitchen** (Zimbabwe), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the debate on human rights was being used for political purposes. Delegations commented on countries whose leadership they did not like, but said nothing about the situation in their own countries. Zimbabwe had a functioning democracy with a strong opposition. Certain countries which disliked President Mugabe, however, were criticizing the recent election. In their view, an election could only be called "free and fair" when they liked the result.

47. The land reform programme was an attempt to redress the legacy of colonialism. The Government appreciated the assistance that it had received to address the humanitarian crisis, but it would not use food as a political tool. Zimbabwe also had a vibrant, independent and free press, and indeed, much of the misinformation mentioned in the statements of a number of delegations had been reported in that press. Finally, his delegation urged the de-politicization of human rights issues.

48. **Mr. Tamir** (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that three days earlier, an Israeli mother and her two children had been murdered in their home; the perpetrator of that crime was a member of the Fatah organization. The Palestinian Authority had condemned the killings and said that they would be investigated. His delegation was awaiting the findings of that investigation and hoped they would be presented before the end of the current session of the Committee.

49. **Ms. Otiti** (Uganda), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, wished to set the record straight in regard to the statement made by the representative of Canada under agenda item 109 (c), which very surprisingly put forward an argument sympathetic to the Lord's Resistance Army rather than condemning its atrocities. In its commitment to ending the suffering which had persisted in northern Uganda for over 16 years, her Government was taking urgent yet cautious steps to save its children from such horrors as abduction, rape and enslavement, to which end the country's President had even relocated to that region. Unable to tolerate that situation, which also created massive internal displacement and caused people to fear for their lives, Uganda would relentlessly pursue its efforts to re-establish the protected environments conducive to child development and to secure the release of all abducted children. It was essential to uphold the basic rights of children, which included protection and care during times of threatened insurgency.

50. She urged the Canadian Government to assist in solving the problem by dispatching representatives to visit northern Uganda in order to gather first-hand information as a preferable alternative to delivering superfluous statements. Notwithstanding the mistakes of its history, Uganda was now a country in which all freedoms were guaranteed under the Constitution and in which vigorous measures were under way to combat corruption. It was therefore extremely disappointing that the Canadian representative should have chosen to misrepresent the situation. Uganda would not deviate from its commitment to the protection and enjoyment of human rights by all of its citizens.

51. **Mr. Andrabi** (Pakistan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the Canadian representative had also chosen to make highly objectionable comments in regard to the human rights situation in Pakistan. He rejected the right of Canada to sit in judgement over countries which it had seemingly selected in an attitude strongly suggestive of human rights imperialism. Pakistan was not answerable to any other country for its human rights record. The

Canadian statement was seriously flawed in both its intent and content, ignoring as it did the wide range of Pakistani initiatives in connection with the promotion and protection of human rights. The Canadian statement had focused on the perceived shortcomings of Pakistan while at the same time ignoring the situation of human rights in Canada, as exemplified in the Amnesty International Report 2001, which cited the needlessly brutal treatment of protestors and indigenous citizens in particular by members of the Canadian police force, who often escaped with impunity.

52. Devoid of all credibility, the Canadian statement had singled out Pakistan for criticism, whereas the previous year's massacre of hundreds of Muslims in India and the human rights violations committed in Indian-occupied Kashmir had escaped all attention. In addition, in paragraphs 333 and 334 of its report (A/57/18), the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination expressed concern at the treatment experienced within the Canadian justice system by Aboriginals and people of African and Asian descent and the discrimination targeting such minorities in the field of employment. Lacking the criteria of objectivity, the Canadian statement not only demonstrated ignorance but was also marked by exaggeration, distortion and selectivity prompted by lack of moral courage, which were the identifying features of tabloid journalism. He consequently had no hesitation in rejecting such a tabloid statement in its entirety.

53. **Mr. Tekin** (Turkey), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he had been unpleasantly surprised by the language used in the statement of the Greek representative. He had anticipated a more forthcoming approach, particularly since the basis for an agreement on a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem had been established only the previous day within the framework of the United Nations. Instead, the attitude expressed raised questions about the sincerity of Greece towards the ongoing efforts to solve that problem. A more constructive stand would have been to encourage the Greek Cypriot leadership to engage seriously in the reconciliation process. The Turkish Cypriot authorities, however, would respond further to the statement in due course. Meanwhile, he emphasized that the solution to the Cyprus problem would not be found at the European Court of Justice and urged all parties to refrain from making destructive accusations and repeating the same allegations at a time when hopes for reconciliation had been raised.

54. **Ms. Sylow** (Norway), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, reiterated her previous statement that the full implementation of and respect for human rights was a challenge for all States, which should accordingly strive to improve their own human rights situations. No country, including her own, was exempt from that challenge and she wished to assure the representative of Cuba of the serious attention which Norway devoted to many of the issues and problems outlined in his response to her earlier statement. She also reiterated her view that every country had a responsibility and obligation to protect victims of human rights abuses and draw attention to any situation which aroused concern. Her Government had simply wished to exercise that prerogative and all others were equally free to do the same.

55. **Ms. Erotokritou** (Cyprus), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the Turkish practice of circulating as United Nations documents letters written by the so-called representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was an abuse of the prerogatives of Member States. In following that practice, Turkey was knowingly acting in violation of Security Council resolutions 541 (1983) and 550 (1984). In her view, the goodwill and cooperation of the parties to the talks on Cyprus were demonstrated at the negotiating table. In that connection, she highlighted the statement issued by the Security Council on 7 July 2002 following a briefing by the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Cyprus that the Turkish Cypriot side had been less constructive in the efforts to solve the Cyprus problem.

56. **Mr. Amorós Núñez** (Cuba), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, agreed with the comments of the representative of Norway in response to his own remarks. He also believed, however, that cooperation was a vital element in achieving respect for human rights. In that regard, he reiterated that the defence of and respect for the right of self-determination should form the basis of all such activities. Any attempt to alter the rich heritage of diversity created as a result of the world's differing socio-economic systems by imposing a single model would simply hinder the promotion of human rights. Objectivity, impartiality and non-selectivity, therefore, constituted the best approach to achieving the key element of cooperation in the field of human rights.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.